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WERNER'S PLAYS

THE PARSON'S GREETINGS



Romantic Comedy
Two Acts
1m. 10f

1 Hour

25 Cents

EDGAR S. WERNER & CO.

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Two-Character Plays

(That is Each Play Has Two Characters)

Specially Recommended and Published by

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Awakening of Galatea. 25c. Illustrated Romantic Statue Scene from play "Pygmalion and Galatea," by W. S. Gilbert. 1m, 1f. 30 min. Arranged and poses by Helen M. Schuster. Photographs from life. Greek costumes. The gods grant artist's prayer to have his woman statue come to life. Her awakening to life and to love, and the predicament the artist (who is married) finds himself in, make a dainty and interesting play, suitable for children or adults.

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Box of Powders. 15c. Farceful Romantic Courting Scene in 1 act. 1 hour. 1m, 1f. Young widow, having set up in window dummy of old man to make good her foolish story to an admirer that she had an old and infirm husband, is frightened by admirer's (who has learned of her deception by use of telescope) threat to force an entrance to her apartment into showing willingness to marry a colonel, who has called, and who, because of plasters on his feet, has been in agony and has been going through ridiculous antics and subterfuges to explain his conduct.

Breaking the Ice. 15c. C. Thomas. Romantic Comedy in 1 act. 50 min. 1m, 1f. Young couple, whose parents have planned their marriage, meet by chance in inn (the girl running from home to avoid meeting man whom she has never seen, the man going to her house to keep the parents' engagement) and like each other so well that, on finding the other's identity, become engaged on the spot and go to girl's home.

Confederates, The. 15c. Comedy Courting Scene in 1 act. 15 min. 1m, 1f. To bring dilatory lover to marriage proposal, a girl, under pretext of warding off old objectionable lover planning to propose, gets lover to pretend an engagement just for one evening at ball, result being a real, permanent engagement.

Crystal Gazer. 15c. L. Montague. Farceful Fortune-teller Scene in 1 act. 30 min. 2f. Mistaking girl seeking lover's address for another girl looking for lost poodle, a fortune-teller gets things ridiculously mixed, getting out of scrape by information in letter from lover, who likewise was looking for girl's address, written by him on his cuff, which he "inadvertently sent to the wash."

Fast Friends. 15c. R. Henry. Comedy Play. 30 min. 2f. Two women, intimate friends, who had never met the other's husband, in telling of their having met, at a concert and lecture, men who spoke of their unappreciative wives, learn that their own husbands had schemed to cure their wives of visiting so much.

Happy Ending. 15c. B. Moore. Romantic Pathos Play in 1 act. 35 min. 2f. Woman, who as young wife had wrongly deserted husband and baby, when middle-aged is so lonely that she advertises for companion. Her own daughter, whom she does not know, gets the position and succeeds in reconciling her parents, to their mutual happiness.

He, She and It. 15c. Wm. Muskerrey. Comedy Matrimonial Scene in 1 act. 30 min. 1m, 1f. Young wife, having worked herself into hysterics because of husband's lateness on evening of her birthday, scolds unceasingly, not giving him chance to explain; but when he produces presents for herself and baby, is ashamed and happy to become reconciled.

Husband in Clover. 15c. H. C. Merivale. Farceful Matrimonial Scene in 1 act. 1 hour. 1m, 1f. Young husband, ennuied with placid life with loving and devoted wife, expresses his discontent by writing in book praises of other girls he thinks he might have married. His wife, reading these entries unbeknown to him, cures his nonsense by simulating the various characteristics he thinks so commendable in others but lacking in his own wife.

Little Flirts. 35c. Clara Macmonagle-Britten. Illustrated Flirtation Dance and Pantomime. For 1 boy and 1 girl, or 2 girls, one dressed as boy. Music and full directions given. 9 photographs from life.

List of Two-Character Plays Continued on Third Cover Page of This Book

The Parson's Greetings

Romantic Comedy in two acts

1 m 10 f

1 Hour

By GAIL KENT.



25 cents

EDGAR S. WERNER & COMPANY
43 EAST 19TH STREET
NEW YORK

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The Parson's Greetings

CHARACTERS.

- RICHARD THOMAS, young bachelor minister.
DAISY LEE, his fiancée, young and pretty.
MAGGIE O'TOOLE, Irish servant at Mr. THOMAS'S.
SLAVEY, at Mr. THOMAS'S boarding-place. (Can double with one of speaking parts in Act. II.)
MISS SUSIE SIMPER, very sentimental elderly woman.
MISS LIZZIE SNIPPERS, sharp-tongued elderly woman.
MRS. PORTLY, president Ladies' Sewing-Circle.
MRS. PLACID, large and easy-going style of woman.
MRS. MONEYBANKS, very autocratic wealthy woman.
MRS. FUDDLE, excitable type of woman.
MRS. PICKLES, sour-faced type, tempery woman.

COSTUMES.

- RICHARD THOMAS, clerical garb.
DAISY LEE, girlish afternoon dress and hat.
MAGGIE O'TOOLE, calico house dress, gingham apron, red hair.
SLAVEY, soiled dress and apron. Hair unkempt.
MISS SUSIE SIMPER, dressed too young for her years; gay ribbon on hair.
MISS LIZZIE SNIPPERS, very neat plain clothes.
MRS. PORTLY, showily dressed, white hair, bonnet with outstanding flower that nods whenever head bobs.
MRS. PLACID, dainty, simple gown with white fichu crossing on bosom, motherly way of dressing hair.
MRS. MONEYBANKS, flashily dressed, hair banded with gold bands, many jewels.
MRS. FUDDLE, carelessly dressed, hair in pompadour, very crooked; hat on one side.
MRS. PICKLES, very prim costume, thin, severely plain hair; very plain bonnet; stands too erect.

ACT I.

REV. MR. THOMAS'S study. Desk C. Books everywhere. Hat and coat on chair or nail.

REV. T. [*finishes writing note, picks it up and reads aloud*]. "And so may the New Year bring you much joy, and many opportunities to uplift your brother, and thus to glorify your own life. And may our church, strengthened by your interest and prayers"—[*knock at door*]. Come in! [*Folds note and adds it to a heap already written.*]

[*Enter MAGGIE R., package and letters in hand. Brings them to desk.*]

MAGGIE. If ye plaze, sir, it's the mail man's been an' lift ye some letthers, an' the landlady tould me to bring thim up ter yez, an' axe if there's onythin' ye'd be loikin' me ter do for yez; a bit o' dustin' maybe, or tidyin' up yer papers? [*Gazes at him admiringly.*]

REV. T. Oh, thank you, Maggie. [*Looks at address on package.*] No, the room is all right, I think. But I shall have a number of letters to go on the afternoon mail. If I should be away, perhaps you will be kind enough to make sure they are posted.

MAGGIE. Sure I'm the kind-hearted one! I'll be afther puttin' thim into the mail man's hands mesilf, sir.

[*Exit MAGGIE R.*]

REV. T. [*Opens package, takes out a number of notes with no envelopes, reads letter that accompanied package slowly, frowning and showing signs of agitation.*]

"DEAR MR. THOMAS:

"I feel our engagement is a mistake, and for the best good of both you and myself should no longer exist. I return your notes and ask you to return mine. Forgive me if I seem unkind, for I feel that I am doing the only right thing, and that a continuation of our engagement would be a great wrong.

"Very sincerely yours,

"DAISY LEE."

REV. T. [*Sits at desk, resting head on hand. Takes framed*

photograph of girl from desk and addresses it.] Daisy, what have I done? I thought you cared for me as I cared for you! Well, I'm not to be thrown aside like this! You'll have to explain to me, face to face. [Puts letters she has returned at left side of desk. Letters he has been writing are at right side of desk. Knock at door.] Come in!

[Enter MAGGIE R. with yellow envelope. She is followed by SLAVEY, who is very slatternly and who carries flannel rags and furniture polish.]

MAGGIE. If yer plaze, sir, a bye jist come wid this telegrafth, an' me misthress writ yer name in a book an' sint me up wid it, hopin' it ain't no bad news, sir. *[Turns to SLAVEY.]* Mrs. Murphy said not to get oil on the carpet a-polishin' up thim chairs. *[SLAVEY shakes head violently to indicate she will not be careless.]*

SLAVEY. Mhmh *[meaning "no"]*.

[SLAVEY gets on knces and begins polishing rungs of chair. Comedy is in her awkward poses and repetition of "mhmh" for "yes," and "no."]

REV. T. *[tearing open envelope, reads aloud]*. "Railroad accident. My husband seriously injured. Come at once."

MAGGIE. Och, sir! If yer plaze, sir, who's afther bein' injured?

REV. T. One of my former parishioners and a very old friend. *[Pulls out watch.]* I've just ten minutes to catch the train. *[Regretfully looks at telegram.]* I'm sorry to hear such news! *[Speaks hurriedly.]* Will you put these letters at the right side of my desk in these addressed envelopes *[indicating stack of envelopes in middle of desk]*, seal them, and mail them? They're my New Year greetings to my parishioners and must be mailed this afternoon—one letter in each envelope. The greetings are all alike, so any note can go into any envelope. If I catch that train I can't stop to attend to them myself. Tell Mrs. Murphy, please, that I will drop her a line when to expect me back. Take this for your trouble, Maggie *[hands her money]*, and good-bye. *[Picks up hat from chair. Exits hastily R.]*

MAGGIE *[to SLAVEY]*. It's an illigint lad he is, onyhow!

SLAVEY. Mhmh *[meaning "yes"]*.

MAGGIE. I ain't able to read meself, but if the envelopes is all written on, an' anyone of thim writin's will go in anyone of thim envelopes, it's meself will lick the invelopes wid plaishure, same as they do be gum-drops, an' han' thim wid me own two fists to Billy Wheeler, the mail man. [*To SLAVEY.*] Don't twist off the leg of the chair! Anyone woold think yez was pullin' a tooth! [*Comes close to desk.*] All the saints go wid Mr. Thomas—the han'some bye he is! An' sure the pulsitations of me heart coom nigh to sufficatin' me when I'm in the same room wid him.

SLAVEY [*puts hand to her own heart*]. Mhmh [*"yes"*].

MAGGIE. Bad 'cess to the loikes of you presumin' to look up to the loikes of him! Shine your chairs! [*SLAVEY meekly resumes work.*] Och, musha! If that ain't a picthure of Judge Lee's daughter a-lookin' sthraight at me on this desk. [*Picks up picture.*] She's the gurl he's so often sindin' me over to whin me work's done, wid the notes he's afther bein' so fond o' writin' her. Ain't it somethin' therrible an' ridiculous, the way the gurls in this town, the whole kit o' 'em, is a-settin' their caps for the poor bye [*sets picture down*], an' him a-sayin' to me most ivery Saturday mornin', "Maggie, if ony o' the young ladies calls to-day, will yez plaze be afther tellin' thim that it's bizzy I am wid me sairmon, an' I'll be glad to see thim another day. But be sure, Maggie, if it's onybody, a man, woman, or child, maybe, what looks in throuble, you jist coom right up an' call me."

SLAVEY [*sniveling*]. Mhmh [*"yes"*].

MAGGIE. I niver yet saw anither bye what warn't tickled to death when the gurls was head over heels gone on him. Men's a consated lot, the whole o' thim, but him, the pairfect gintlemoon o' him, seems worritted by the gurls, an' nowhere so set up in air as Policeman Burke, what thought he had me an' Annie Doolan on the sthring to oncet, as if I'd have an eye to that gawky, red-headed Michael Burke, whin me heart's near breakin' wid me in-flatuation for the minister. [*Pulls out handkerchief and cries. SLAVEY weeps too, and wipes eyes with flannel polishing rag.—Severely.*] Shtop shnivelin' and shine your chairs! [*SLAVEY resumes work.*] But I must be tindin' to me bizziness or the mis-

thress'll be comin' home from the shtore an' axin' me why ain't the dinner cookin'. [*Picks up an envelope.*] Ain't it the illigint writher he is, an' I do be wishin' I could be readin' the worruds o' him. [*Looks at DAISY's letters on left side of desk.*] Faix, an' it's hard up for paper the poor bye is, for these greetings as he called thim looks ould an' crumpled loike. But it ain't himself as kin afford luxuries wid so many poor folk a-beggin' of him night an' day, 'n' him bein' so hard on his shirts 'n' stockin's! [*Picks up one of DAISY's letters.*] Now, I'll shtick this one into the envelope, an' paste it down, an' all the rist o' thim. [*Puts DAISY's notes into envelopes, seals them.*] Och, an' I wish it was proposals of marriage to mesilf from the Reverend Richard Thomas that I was a-pasthin' here.

SLAVEY. Mhmh. [*Clasps hands on bosom and rolls up her eyes.*]

MAGGIE. Wipe your nose an' shine thim chairs! [SLAVEY obeys.] "Greetin's," whativer thim be, to thim upper-crust hathin wimin, what goes to church wid their best clo'es an' mannenses, a-hopin' they'll kitch the bye for some o' their upstart daughters [*seals letters one after another*], an' it's niver a look he'll take at little Maggie Murphy at all, at all, what woold believe ivery worrud o' him, as quick as I would Father Malone, an' woold keep his shirts an' stockin's minded, wid cookin' that woold put flesh on his poor bones, an' shooin' away the gurls the same as I woold flies from me parlor, wid niver a worrud from him askin'. It's plain to be seen who woold make a foine Mrs. Thomas.

SLAVEY. [*Grins self-consciously.*] Mhmh!

MAGGIE [*yells*]. Shine your chairs and shut your face! [SLAVEY sobers up and obeys.]

[*Exit MAGGIE R., carrying DAISY's letters sealed in the freshly-addressed envelopes. SLAVEY makes a face at her as she exits, comes to middle of room, sits on floor, pulls apple from one pocket and piece of bread from other and begins to eat ravenously.*]

[CURTAIN.]

ACT II.

Church parlor. Sewing-machine L. Couch R. Table C. Chairs in semicircle. Doors R. and L. Muslin articles in the making are scattered on floor and furniture. Each woman is busy with a separate piece.

MISS SIPPERS [*at sewing-machine; stops machine and looks at ladies*]. I hearn as how he left mighty sudden. Run all the way to the train, an' I want to tell this sewin'-society I've got reason to believe it's just as well he went as fast as he did.

MRS. PICKLES. There's usually some reason an' some disgrace mixed up in it when a young man clears out of town on the day of prayer-meetin' night.

MRS. PLACID. It may be he's sufferin' with some sorrow what many of us don't know about—will you pass me the thread, Mrs. Pickles, please?—an' they ain't nothin' like a change of scene to cure sorrow, you know.

MRS. PORTLY. I met Maggie Murphy, who works where Mr. Thomas boards, and she said he had a telegram that one of his old church-members was hurt, and he had to go out to see him at once. That excuse will do as well as any! Mrs. Murphy, his landlady, couldn't come to sewing-circle to-day—the shears, please, Mrs. Placid—or we would have heard the right of the matter. I'm inclined to think, and I'm the last one to think ill of anyone, that he had good reason for skipping town. My husband, who is chairman of the trustees, you know, will have the matter thoroughly investigated; and there is another matter, too, which concerns our minister, which will be thoroughly investigated. But I will say no more of that. I never indulge in gossip, you know.

MRS. MONEYBANKS. I am inclined to agree with Mrs. Placid that a great sorrow may have come to our young minister. We must use considerable charity in our judgment, for even money cannot heal a broken heart.

MISS SNIPPERS. Well, it can do considerable toward mendin' it, Mrs. Moneybanks.

MISS SIMPER. Please pass the basting-thread, Mrs. Portly.

[*Threads needle, speaks affectedly.*] It may be, Mrs. Pickles, that some love-affair has come into our young minister's life; and, not knowing how tenderly another heart beats in response to his own, he hastens away from the home of his loved one, fearing to learn his fate.

MRS. PICKLES. Stuff 'n' nonsense! If a young man's got an honest love affair, it ain't no reason that I can see why he should clear out of town.

MISS SNIPPERS. No, it ain't, Susie Simper, an' if you'd pay more attention to your work, an' try less to scare up a love-affair for Mr. Thomas, you wouldn't be gatherin' the hem of that apron 'stead of the top.

[MISS SIMPERS *sees mistake and reverses apron.*]

MRS. PLACID. I guess Susie ain't the only one that's upset this afternoon, what with the minister going away so sudden, and stories all over town about him.

[*Suppressed excitement is evident. Ladies all shake out their sewing agitatedly, then return it to their laps.*]

MRS. PORTLY. Yes, I'm thoroughly upset myself, I confess. I had such a good opinion of Mr. Thomas. It was only a short time ago, I had a good opportunity to talk with Daisy Lee. I told her I had heard rumors of an engagement between her and Mr. Thomas; and I felt, since she is a motherless girl, her father all wrapped up in his law-books, and her aunt in the housekeeping, that it was my duty to talk with her. [*Ladies all hitch chairs closer to speaker.*] I told her we all liked her real well, but there was no denying she was flighty, and flightiness was the last quality a minister's wife ought to have. [*Ladies nod to each other approvingly.*] You know she's never taken much interest in church matters until lately, and I asked her how she could feel competent to preside at the Dorcas Society, hold mothers' meetings, and lead evening services in church sometimes, beside being at-home to strangers and visiting the sick and dying. She wilted right down and said she knew Mr. Thomas needed a good practical wife, and

I needn't have any more fears about her being the one. I must say I was real pleased at her being so sensible. But *now* I don't believe he's half good enough for *her*.

MRS. PLACID. Daisy's a real smart, pretty girl, and——

MISS SIMPER [*looking off through open door L.*]. Here comes Mrs. Fuddle for all the world like a house afire! Ain't she the rattle-patedest you ever see?

MISS SNIPPERS [*leaving sewing-machine and sitting at L.*]. She ain't so rattled over love-affairs as some folks I know.

MISS SIMPER. I'll thank you for those shears, Lizzie Snippers, an' I don't know as I come to sewin'-circle to have slurrin' remarks thrown in my face. There's some as is old maids 'cause they *have* to be, an' there's some as is old maids 'cause they *wants* to be, an' I guess everybody in this town knows *I* don't belong to the first class, as some others does what ain't a thousand miles from here.

[*Enter MRS. FUDDLE breathlessly, L.*]

MRS. FUDDLE. For the land's sake, ladies, what do you suppose? [*Sits on lounge, fans violently with handkerchief.*] You know I've be'n away visitin' my husband's aunt's second husband's sister, Marthy Doolittle, an' I just got back. I found this letter in my mail-box. [*Takes it out of front of dress and shows it to ladies.*] Who do you suppose it's from?

MISS SIMPER. Who? Who?

MRS. FUDDLE. You'll never guess. [*Draws sheet of paper from envelope.*] It's from Mr. Thomas.

ALL. Our Mr. Thomas? Our minister? Did he say why he left town? Is he coming back? What did he write to you?

MRS. FUDDLE. Yes, our Mr. Thomas. I don't know no more about it than you do. But it sounds like somebody had tempted him to look on the wine cup when it is red! It's the most high-falutinst you ever hearn of. Want me to read it?

ALL. Oh, yes! Do! Read it now!

MRS. FUDDLE. Well [*adjusts spectacles and reads*]:

“MY DARLING:

“I am sitting in the twilight thinking of you. Do

you know, my dear one, you are the most beautiful thing in all this beautiful world."

[ALL laugh.]

MRS. FUDDLE. Well, I don't see anything so funny in that!

[Reads again.]

"Sometimes I can hardly realize that you love me as I do you,

"Until the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And leaves of the Judgment Book unfold."

[Looks around.] That's a good while, ain't it? [Reads again.]

"I shall be over Wednesday evening. Shall we find a nook in your garden where we can discuss the cost of living for two in a country parsonage? My dear, I love you! I love you!

"RICHARD THOMAS."

MRS. FUDDLE. Now, what on earth do you make of that? It gave me short-of-breathness! An' here it is Thursday, an' come to find out, he warn't in town Wednesday night, let alone his coming up to my garden to talk over housekeeping. Don't that whole thing smack of the wine-cup?

MISS SIMPER. He said he was coming up to see *me*, Monday evening.

ALL. What! You?

MISS SIMPER. Yes. I don't understand it, but I got a letter from the minister. Maybe the other one was mine, too, and went to Mrs. Fuddle by mistake. He's all upset in it not knowing whether I'll say yes to it or not. [Shakes out sewing consciously.]

MISS SNIPPERS. He needn't have worried himself about that. [Tears a piece of muslin with loud noise.]

MRS. FUDDLE. For the land's sake, you got one, too, Susie Simper? What'd he say to you?

MISS SIMPER [blushing and smiling, taking it from front of dress]. I suppose I may as well read it, though such things are very sacred to oneself!

"DEAR ONE:

"I looked at you in church this morning, and your sweet, pretty face lifted up to me distracted my thoughts until I could hardly keep my place in the service."

MISS SNIPPERS. Ridiculous! [*Tears muslin.*] He calls *that* a face!

MISS SIMPER [*goes on reading*].

"The day has dragged. One moment I think, although I am unworthy, perhaps she will say yes, the next moment I am plunged in despair. I am coming to-morrow evening for my answer. Oh, deal mercifully with me!

RICHARD THOMAS."

MISS SIMPER [*speaks sentimentally*]. I think that's real touching.

MISS SNIPPERS. He must be crazy!

MISS SIMPER. Jealous because he didn't write it to you!

MRS. PORTLY. Well, I may as well tell you that I received a letter, too.

MRS. FUDDLE. What, you, Mrs. Portly!

MISS SIMPER. And you married, and got six children!

MRS. PICKLES. Ain't it shameful! [*As DAISY LEE enters L.*] Howdy! Sit down, Miss Lee. You don't know what you've been missin'.

MRS. PORTLY. I wasn't sure it was from him until I heard these other letters, but Deacon Portly was going to investigate the matter. I may as well read it.

[*DAISY stands quietly in order not to interrupt. Listens. Looks amazed, then sinks into chair at extreme L.*]

"SWEETHEART:

"If you could only know how I love you. Night and day I think of you. You are so young, so flower-like [*MRS. PORTLY shakes head and flower on bonnet bobs*], so fair, yet so true that I tremble when I think what great happiness has come to me. I shall be over to-night to tell you of a gas-stove for sale. I saw it to-day, and it is warranted not to scorch the daintiest concoctions a parson's little wife can cook. Until to-night, good-bye.

DICK."

MRS. FUDDLE. Well, if that ain't the limit! Are there any more o' them letters flyin' round?

MISS SNIPPERS. I don't know as that's any one's business but my own.

MRS. FUDDLE. You too, Lizzie Snippers?

MISS SIMPER. Some folks ain't used to gettin' love letters!

MISS SNIPPERS. I guess for a woman that's fifty if she's a day, an' has to have a switch an' false teeth, an' oggles every man from the minister to the grocery boy, you've thrown enough slurs on me, Susie Simper. I was calklatin' to read the letter soon's I got to the end of this seam. Now, I've got to the end, I'll read it. It's short, but it's pack' full of foolishness an' I don't know but I'll see Lawyer Grey about damages. [*Pulls letter from shirtwaist and reads.*]

"BELOVED:

"Why are you so cold to me? How have I offended you? Let me come and kiss away your displeasure."

MISS SIMPER. That would have been your first kiss, wouldn't it? [*Giggles.*]

MISS SNIPPERS [*angrily*]. Well, no man will ever want to kiss you for any reason whatever, unless he's taken leave of his senses! Mr. Thomas did have sense enough to get out. [*Indicates letter.*] I ain't goin' to read the rest of it.

MISS SIMPER. I guess you were just makin' up what you *did* read.

MISS SNIPPERS. Susie Simper, if I was so crazy for a man as you be——

MRS. PLACID. Now you two girls stop bickerin' an' I'll read you the letter I got.

MISS SIMPERS AND MISS SNIPPERS [*in chorus*]. What? You?

MRS. PLACID. To tell the truth, it worritted me some at first 'cause I didn't know but he'd gone off his head, me bein' a widow with two grown-up sons. [*Takes letter from front of waist and reads.*]

"STAR OF MY LIFE:

"I was sorry not to see you last night, but I had to go to see poor old Mr. Jones. All the way home I thought of the beautiful time coming when I should return from sick calls to a cozy home and the sweetest little wife in Christendom. You may look for me at half-past seven this evening.

Yours,

"DICK THOMAS."

MRS. PLACID. In my opinion, some one ought to find out where he is and take him to a doctor.

MRS. MONEYBANKS. Maybe he'll have to go to a sanitorium. I'm inclined to think he's worryin' over money matters. [*Draws letter from front of waist.*]

ALL. You got one, too?

MRS. MONEYBANKS [*opens letter and reads*].

"DEAR ONE:

"It worries me sometimes when I think what a change it will be for you to leave your home to live in a parsonage on the small income that our church allows. It may be that in another year they will raise my salary. Do you want to wait another year on uncertainty, dear, or are you brave enough to begin with what I now have?"

MRS. PICKLES. I guess he needn't worry none that this church will ever raise his salary so long's he writes letters like a love-cracked school-boy! Here's what he wrote me, an' my husband's fightin' mad over it.

"DEAREST:

"How long a day seems that doesn't bring a glimpse of your sweet self. My dear, if you could only know how——"

DAISY [*rises, walks toward MRS. PICKLES, holding out hand*]. Please don't read any more, and give *me* that letter, Mrs. Pickles, it's mine.

MRS. FUDDLE. For the land's sake, Daisy Lee! What are you talkin' about?

MRS. PICKLES. *Your* letter, you say?

DAISY. Mine!

MRS. PORTLY. How do you know it's yours?

DAISY. I came in when you were reading. They are letters written to me, and which I sent back to Mr. Thomas only the other day. I would like to know how you all came by them, and why you are reading and discussing them like this!

MISS SNIPPERS. They was mailed to us, and my envelope was addressed in his writing.

ALL. And mine! And mine!

DAISY. I don't understand it.

MISS SIMPER. He mailed them all over town. Ain't that awful!

DAISY [*earnestly*]. I don't believe he did it. I can't believe he did it.

MRS. PLACID. Tell us about your side of it, Daisy. If they was your letters, why did you send them back?

DAISY. I decided to break my engagement to him.

MISS SIMPER. The idea of any woman doin' that!

DAISY. So I sent back his letters, and that's all I know about it. [*Begins to cry.*]

MRS. FUDDLE. For the land's sake!

[MINISTER THOMAS *appears in door L., but no one sees him.*]

MRS. PLACID. It's too bad, Daisy. [*Puts arm around DAISY, who cries on her shoulder.*] There, there, you jest cry it out. It's too bad, you poor motherless girl.

MRS. MONEYBANKS. The man's crazy!

MRS. PORTLY. He's a dishonorable——

MRS. PICKLES. Underhanded——

MISS SIMPER. Deceitful——

MISS SNIPPERS. Miserable——

MRS. PLACID. Two-faced——

MRS. MONEYBANKS. Poverty-stricken——

MRS. FUDDLE. Wretch——

ALL. Villain! Hypocrite! Thief! Good-for-nothing!

REV. T. [*advances*]. Who?

ALL [*except DAISY, pointing at him accusingly*]. You!

REV. T. What a beautiful home-coming!

DAISY [*to all*]. He's not what you say he is! I don't understand about these letters, but I know it is just some terrible mistake. Richard Thomas is a good, honorable, Christian gentleman, and I love him with all my heart, and if he still wants me to marry him, I'll do it, to show you all I still believe in him.

MRS. FUDDLE [*walking up, puts letter into REV. T.'s hand*]. Did you send me that letter, sir?

MRS. MONEYBANKS [*same business*]. And me this one?

MISS SIMPER [*same business*]. And me that one? [*Bursts into tears.*]

MISS SNIPPERS [*shakes finger under his nose as she hands him letter*]. You can't deny this is your writing.

MRS. PLACID [*taps letter before giving it to him*]. I guess you've got considerable to explain.

MRS. PICKLES [*returning letter*]. Haven't you any sense of shame?

MRS. PORTLY [*returning letter*]. The idea! sending second-hand love-letters, and me, married and mother of six children.

[*Enter MAGGIE unobserved at L. Stands by door. She is gaudily dressed.*]

REV. T. [*looks at letters, dismayed*]. Why, ladies [*examines letters*]. These are all letters I wrote Miss Lee, to whom I was engaged! What practical joke is this? How did you come by them?

MRS. FUDDLE. For the land's sake! How could we come by them unless you sent them to us?

MRS. PORTLY. They every one came through the mail in your handwriting.

MAGGIE [*advancing to middle of room*]. Shure, Mr. Thomas, may I be spakin' a very important word in your private ear in public?

REV. T. [*relieved at seeing her*]. The very person I was wishing I might send for at this moment! How comes it, Maggie, that you sent out these letters to my parishioners instead of the

New Year greetings I told you to put into the envelopes? I had to catch my train, you know——

MAGGIE [*explains remorsefully*]. I got twisted! Afther I gave thim greetin's to the postman I says to meself—"Mr. Thomas said for me to mail the right-hand letters, and begorra I was that absent-minded I mailed the left-handed ones inshtead!" [*All, with exclamations of surprise, look at each other, beginning to understand how the mistake occurred. MAGGIE looks around inquiringly.*] There ain't no trouble come of it, I hope?

MRS. PLACID [*smiling sweetly*]. Oh, no trouble at all! Why, no matter how the matter looked on the surface, we fully trust our beloved minister. We think there is no one so honorable——

MRS. MONEYBANKS. Sensible!

MRS. FUDDLE. Good!

MRS. PICKLES. Dignified!

MRS. PORTLY. Above reproach!

MISS SIMPER. Sincere!

MISS SNIPPERS [*only one dissenting snorts*]. Hm!

MAGGIE [*smiles broadly*]. Then, if it's all right, I'm goin'! [*Goes toward door L.*] Policeman Burke is waitin' outside for me. We're intindin' to shtep around the corner to shpake a worrud to Father Malone concernin' our weddin' a week from to-morrow. I bid ye good-afternoon. [*Exits L.*]

MRS. PORTLY. Talking about weddings, I've a confession to make, Mr. Thomas. I took Daisy one side a week or two ago and told her she was too flighty for a minister's wife——

REV. T. [*understandingly to DAISY*]. Now, I see why you wrote me as you did!

MRS. PORTLY. I've changed my mind since then. You two are just made for each other. And I and the Deacon—if you still want to get married—will see what we can do about having your salary raised.

REV. T. Thank you, Mrs. Portly. Good news. [*Enthusiastically.*] Daisy! [*Takes her hands in his.*]

MRS. PLACID. And we sewin'-society ladies will all unite in

givin' you as a weddin'-token of regard—[raises white article on which she has been working].

ALL [with enthusiasm, each waving piece of white sewing in air]. A White Shower!

[They continue to wave.]

[CURTAIN.]



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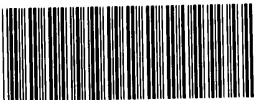
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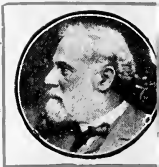
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